

MINUTES: Centerville Township Windmill Ordinance Committee May 15, 2006

Present: Molly Hyde, Mark Zemanek, Carolyn Weed, Travis Nelson, Richard Kobetz, Gary Cook, David Wurm, Joseph Czerniak.

Absent: Dale Pleva, Richard Light

Mr. Zemanek reported on a conversation with Jim Bardenhagen in regards to Farmland Preservation contracts with farmers. It is not entirely clear how those easements could be affected by turbine easements. The Farmland Preservation requires a 40-acre minimum with 20 ½ acres put into preservation. It is possible that federal or state conservation easements would be in conflict with additional easements as they are designed to save money on taxes and to save land. It was suggested that we contact other county directors for easement contract information also.

The vision section of the Centerville Township Plan, adopted in 2005, was reviewed. This vision is based on a 1990 census and 1995 survey. It is important to maintain the rural character of the township. Plan implementation and revision requires that questions be asked as to the effect any proposed actions would have on the native terrain and character of the township. If an action does not “add to the vitality and viability of the rural community” it should not be taken.

The committee will begin to review other existing commercial wind ordinances. Mr. Kobetz commented that he had seen the Huron twp. ordinance and that it had appeared to be very loosely written. The project in that area had come up very quickly and the ordinance may have overlooked possible future issues. Potential problems such as structural, noise, zoning enforcement, consequences need to be addressed. Ms. Weed referred to the detail in the Shawano ordinance. Noise is defined by frequencies and octave bands. There is periodic monitoring and machines in violation are shut down.

This is likely to be a long process while we conduct all of the necessary research. The committee discussed a moratorium while we gather information and draft the ordinance. Could we face difficulties if an application were submitted before we complete our work? It would take months for an application process to be completed and a special use permit issued. The planning commission would likely kick any applications back to our committee, but are we then addressing an ordinance to a particular project? Mr. Czerniak and Mr. Wurm both stated that the township does not favor moratoriums and if one were to be granted, it would only be for a very short period of time and be based on definite facts. If we don't pursue a moratorium, is the township's current ordinance legally vulnerable to a special land use permit application? Our current ordinance could be amended to limit the height of commercial windmills until an ordinance resulting from the committees work is adopted by the township. This option could still take months until approved, from the submission to planning, public hearings and finally on to the township board, but it does allow the committee the ability to research and draft an ordinance without the time constraints of a moratorium. It was pointed out that it took Otsego over two years from research to final approval of their ordinance. A 150' height

limit, for now, would be consistent with what is already written for renewable energy towers. The township is more vulnerable when there are conflicting statements existing in the current ordinance. The committee decided by consensus to recommend a change in wording to the zoning board. It should be presented at their next meeting.

The committee would like to speak to people from Otsego, Shawano, and other groups to gain insight from their experience. It is important to speak with people who have no financial stake in a project.

Mr. Cook reported on his conversation with Frank Septer, an engineer from Cherryland Electric who has recently attended a wind generation conference. The required transport lines for a large project would need to be large. For example, 46KV lines would be those on wood poles on Bugai Rd. and across the bridge in Lake Leelanau. 138KV would be the next size. Probably two substations would be required for 32 wind generators. The substations would be 100'x100' or 150'x150' and would require fairly large line. 1 or 2 substations would be required between the generation site and where the power feeds out. The wind generator on M72 always has problems. In Michigan, energy is lost in the lines due to low use. He did state that the Public Services Utility Commission is an important resource.

Next meeting date will be May 22, 2006

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Hyde